DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 259 086 CE 041 058

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TITLE Some Questions to Consider in Contract Training Programs Conducted under JTPA.
PUB DATE Oct 84
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools (72nd, Maui, HI, October 14-17, 1984).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Contracts; *Employment Programs; *Federal Legislation; Federal Programs; *Guidelines; *Job Training
IDENTIFIERS *Job Training Partnership Act 1982

ABSTRACT

Provisions of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and differences between it and previous manpower training acts present questions for potential training institutions. Suggested ways of dealing with these questions are discussed. The first question concerns steps to become a contractor of training programs under JTPA. These include (1) identifying the school's service delivery area (SDA) staff office, (2) calling that office and determining procedures for adding one's school to the "bidders list," and (3) obtaining sample requests for proposals and completion guidelines. The second question addresses advantages and disadvantages of government contract training under JTPA from the school operator's perspective. Two major advantages are that these programs provide a broader mix or variety of sources for student tuition and they serve to offset overhead costs. Disadvantages include unpredictability of periods between awarding of contracts and tendency to establish unrealistic or unattainable goals. The third question concerns strategies schools can follow to contract successful training programs under JTPA, including thorough familiarity with SDA guidelines and goals concerning target career areas, development of a rapport with SDA staff, submission of a bid for services the school can successfully provide, avoidance of situations that put the operation in a "peak and valley" pattern, and inclusion in the bid of full direct costs with a reasonable overhead offset. (YLB)

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ABSTRACT

Some Questions to Consider in Contract Training Programs Conducted Under JTPA#

by

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The provisions of JTPA, and the differences between JTPA and previous manpower training acts present some questions for the potential training institutions. Specifically, potential training institutions must consider the following questions:

What steps are involved to become a contractor of training programs under JTPA?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of government contract training under JTPA from the School operator's perspective?

Are there suggested or implied strategies that schools can follow in contract training under JTPA that may facillitate operations and increase chances of success for a training program?

These questions are discussed in this paper.

#Paper read at the 72nd Annual Convention of Association of Independent Colleges and Schools, October 14-17, 1984, Maui, Hawaii.

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Government sponsored training programs as we know them today began in 1960 with the Area Re-devlopment Act. This act was designed to identify areas of high unemployment, and to focus program activities on retraining the unemployed for existing and projected jobs.

The Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA) replaced the Area Re-development Act. The MDTA inluded most of the provisions of the Area Re-development Act, and it extended the focus of program activities to include job training for areas that had a shortage of people with specific skills to fill available jobs. Under MDTA, training requirements (program criteria and goals) were identified and defined at the federal level, and potential contracting institutions responded with bids. Contracts for training programs were awarded and monitored at the state level. Initially, only public non-profit training institutions could submit a bid and receive a contract. This limited flexibility and variety in training programs. The State of Illinois was the first state to open MDTA bid proposals to proprietary schools. This action was an attempt to increase flexibility, variety and innovation in training programs (the Metropolitan School of Tailoring, a division of Marion Adult Education and Career Training Center, Chnicago, Illinois was the first

proprietary school to receive a training contract from the state of Illinois).

During the nineteen sixties and early and mid nineteen seventies, some program modifications were made to the MDTA. These program modifications included a connection between MDTA and participating support services (i.e. counseling, child care, medical and dental care). In addition, an attempt was made to increase employer involvement in the program through on-the-job training (OJT). As with previous acts, an emphasis was placed on areas of high unemployment through the establishment of the Concentrated Employment Program (CEP).

In the later nineteen seventies, as part of President Carter's economic expansion program, the concentrated Employment Training Act (CETA) was enacted. This act attempted to consolidate all of the positive aspects of MDTA (including the modifications of the nineteen sixties and the early and mid nineteen seventies).

Other than the attempt at consolidation, there were few programatic differences between MDTA and CETA. The most significant differences between MDTA and CETA was that the latter placed an increased emphasis on public serivce employment, and the manner of implementing and monitoring the CETA program was developed. State involvement was eliminated both in implementing and monitoring, and these responsibilities were given to local service delivery areas.

These changes, however, produced some negative criticism, particularly in regard to the administrative structural changes that were made. For example, some critics accused new administrations of trying to "reinvent the wheel." Also, conflicts and struggles to gain power occurred between state and local service areas, and these hindered smoothe and effective transfer of administrative responsibilities. Finally, a lack of uniformity and precision in the definition and description of program aspects and interpretation led to abuses. These abuses were partricularly present in the area of public service employment (for example, abuses sometimes occurred in screening participants in terms of the under skilled and the long term unemployed--direct beneficiaries of the program were not limited to the long term unemployed and under skilled).

Still, some experts in manpower training consider CETA the best designed and most effectively implemented training program, and this evaluation includes a comparison to the current training act: the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

The Reagon administration established JTPA as a program that would eliminate the administrative problems and criticisms associated with CETA. The major program change included in JTPA was the elimination of involvement in the public employment sector, and the extablishment of a connection between performance in terms of proposed retention, completion and placement, and scheduled payments to the contracting training institution. Also, an emphasis was placed on involvement in the private employment sector creating a new public and private partnership to plan and deliver job training.

JTPA contains five titles (the following is a summary of Fact Sheet No. ETA 83-3, U.S. Department of Labor Program Highlights, Job Training Partnership Act):

Title I - Job Training Partnership (establishes the administrative structure for the delivery of job trainig services):

A. State Job Training Coordinating Councils (SJTCC's)--advisory function.

B. Service Delivery Areas (SDA's)--program implementation.

C. Private Industry Councils (PIC's)--Program Coordination.

Title II - Training Services for the Disadvantaged - also contains a separate authorization for a summer youth program.

Title III - Employment and Training Assistance for Dislocated Workers - authorizes a state-administered program to aid laid-off workers with little prospects for reemployment.

Title IV - Federally administered Programs - authorizes federally administered programs for Native Americans, migrant and seasonal farm workers, veterans; establishes the Job Corp and the National Commission for Employment Policy.

Title V - Amendments to other statues - amends the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, and the Social Security Act provisions relating to the Work Incentive Program.

These provisions of JTPA, and the differences between JTPA and previous manpower training acts present some questions for the potential training institutions. Specifically, potential training institutions must consider the following questions:

What steps are involved to become a contractor of training programs under JTPA?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of government contract training under JTPA from the School operator's perspective?

Are there suggested or implied strategies that schools can follow in contract training under JTPA that may facillitate operations and increase chances of success for a training program?

First, the steps to follow in order to become a contractor are:

1. Identify your school's service delivery area (SDA) staff office. These are designated by the governor. Areas that are automatically eligible to be SDA's are units of general local government with a population of 200,000 or more.

2. Call the staff office and determine the procedures for adding your school to the "bidders list." At this time, have the office identify the individual who is responsible for monitoring the bidders list, and submit a written request to this individual to place your school on the list. After submitting a written request, pursue normal follow-up procedures.

3. Once on the bidders list, your school will receive requests for proposals (RFP's) as they are issued by the administrative staff of the SDA. Some SDA's issue a sample copy of RFP's, and guidelines for completing them. Be sure to obtain the sample copy and guidelines. It is important that sample copies and/or guidelines of RFP's be obtained for each SDA, because requirements for completing and submitting proposals differ among SDA's. For example, cities located in the same county have different requirements from each other, and these requirements may differ from the county requirements. It is important that requirements, guidelines, and format be strictly followed, and that proposals be concise (volume does not insure that a contract will be awarded and, in fact, voluminous proposals may be detrimental).

Federal government training contracts offer some advantages to the proprietary school over

normal matriculation.

The two major advantages are that these programs provide a broader mix or variety of sources for student tuition, and they serve as an additional offset to overhead costs. This latter point is particularly advantageous, because even if the contract is projected on a "break even" basis, fixed overhead costs are still offset.

There are, however, some disadvantages in federal governemt training contracts. The period between the award of one contract and the award of a second contract is unpredicatable. This unpredicatability makes planning difficult, and the difficulty is compounded by the usually short start-up time federal government contracts impose on the school. The school does not have the luxury of planning for a set number of students to begin training on a set date. Instead, the school must have in place all of the program mechanisims to begin training immediately or, at best, after a very short notice.

Another disadvantage is that federal government contracts seem to encourage schools to establish unrealistic or unattainable goals or program outcomes. Schools should submit bids that include goals that can be attained. If the contract is awarded and the goals are attained, the beginning of a long-term relationship is established. This is the kind of relationship each school should attempt to establish for effective contracting. The tendency to establish unrealistic or unattainable goals can be avoided, and this is not an inherent disadvantage in federal government contracts.

Finally, there are strategies that schools can follow to facillitate operations and increase chances of success for a federal government contract training program.

1. Schools must be thoroughly familiar with the specific guidelines and goals of the SDA concerning target career areas. For example, schools should know the student population for whom the program is conducted, the allowable attrition ratios, and placement expectations. Knowing this information can eliminate potential difficulties which can hinder success.

2. The school staff should develop a rapport with the staff of the SDA responsible for the

contract . The SDA staff is the best resource for information; also, the SDA staff must be frequently contacted during the duration of a contract for information, clarification, follow-up purposes, etc. Thus, it is vital that a good working relationship be developed with the SDA staff.

3. Submit a bid for services that the school can be resonably assured of successfully providing. Be aware of the limitations of both the school and the student. For example, a student cannot be trained in a six week period to be a good word processor operator unless the student enters the program with skills developed at an appropriate level of achievement to enable the student to be successfully trained. Success is not likely in this case no matter what the resources of the school are. Also, the resources and staff of the school must be adequate to attain the goals of the program.

4. Avoid situations which will put your operation in a "peak and valley" pattern. Most contracts are for a year or less. Thus, a school which has a staff and contract facilities for 500 contract students will be in a very awkward position if the contract is not renewed, or if there is a long delay before the contract is renewed. Also, the history of government sponsored training programs demonstrates that there are frequent changes made in these programams. Changes in program regulations, procedures, formats, priorities, etc. are particularly prevelent when there is a change in the federal administration. Each time a change in administrations is made, changes in program regulations, procedures, formats, priorities, etc. are made, also; and schools must take time to "gear up" to accomodate these changes. schools must take time to "gear up" to accomodate these changes. Enrollment tends to drop during these periods of change or "gearing up." Schools must attempt to avoid sudden drops in enrollment (500 students today, 100 students tomorrow), and only careful scheduling and planning are likely to avoid this. Even the most careful scheduling and planning, however, does not always avoid the situation of "peaks and valleys" when a school is involved in government contract training programs.

5. Include in the bid full direct costs with a reasonable overhead offset. Avoid entering a contract which will result in a loss.

These are some of the questions that must be considered when conducting training programs under JTPA. Perhaps, this discussion can contribute to the successful operation of programs conducted by schools under JTPA.